

Ser. No: 10/688,985

September 29, 2004

IN THE DESCRIPTION:

Please amend the five paragraphs starting on page 6 line 19 and ending on page 7 line 22, as follows:

— According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a pontoon, the pontoon comprises: a plurality of generally elongated shell segments, each the shell segment being made out of a generally rigid material, each the shell segment defining a pair of generally opposed segment longitudinal ends, at least one of the segment longitudinal ends being a segment connecting end; each the shell segment having a segment peripheral wall surrounding a segment inner volume and defining at least one end aperture extending into the segment inner volume from the segment connecting end, the plurality of shell segments connecting to each other with a male-female engagement into an end-to-end configuration so as to form a generally elongated shell, the shell defining a shell longitudinal axis extending through the plurality of shell segments, said male-female engagement including a male segment connecting end connectable to an adjacent female segment connecting end, said female segment connecting end being a longitudinal end portion of said segment peripheral wall; a filling component positioned within the segment inner volumes, the filling component being made out of a generally buoyant material, the filling component being slidably and successively insertable through the at least one end apertures in a direction generally along the shell longitudinal axis and towards corresponding the opposed segment longitudinal end, the volume of the filling component being such that the combination of the shell and the filling component forms a generally buoyant combination.

~~Typically, adjacent of the plurality of shell segments connect to each other with a male-female engagement.~~

~~Typically, the male-female engagement includes a male segment connecting end connecting to an adjacent female segment connecting end.~~

Typically, the male segment connecting end is formed by a throat section located at a longitudinal end portion of the segment peripheral wall

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~~having a periphery generally smaller than the remaining longitudinal portion of the segment peripheral wall.~~

Typically, the ~~female segment connecting end is an opposed longitudinal end portion of the remaining longitudinal portion of the segment peripheral wall.~~ The male segment connecting end is generally slidably connectable to the adjacent female segment connecting end with a longitudinal sliding engagement. --

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 9 line 10 as follows:

-- In one embodiment, the pontoon further comprises a connecting component connecting said female segment connecting ends of adjacent shell segments to one another, said connecting component at least partially filling said segment inner volumes adjacent said segment peripheral walls at said female segment connecting ends. --

Please amend the first full paragraph of page 10 as follows:

-- According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a shell for pontoon, the shell comprises a generally elongated shell segment being made out of a generally rigid material, the shell segment defining a shell longitudinal axis, the shell segment having a segment peripheral wall extending between a pair of generally opposed longitudinal segment closing ends and surrounding a shell inner volume, said shell segment having a longitudinal throat section located intermediate said segment closing ends, the shell segment being dividable in a direction generally transverse to the shell longitudinal axis at a location adjacent said throat section into at least two longitudinal sections with a respective end aperture extending into respective the shell inner volume so as to allow the shell inner volumes to be at least partially fillable by a filling component. --

Please delete the second full paragraph of page 10.

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Please amend the five paragraphs starting on page 30 line 21 and ending on page 32 line 2, as follows:

— Typically, the connecting component 141 ~~component 140~~ is the throat section 102 of the shell 100 separated from both segment closing ends 94 such as when the shell 100 is divided at both first and second predetermined dividing regions 104, 104'. Such a typical connecting component 141 ~~component 140~~ is shown in dotted lines in Fig. 12 connecting the last two shell segments 90 on the right hand side of the Figure.

Preferably, the connecting component 141 ~~component 140~~ defines a connector longitudinal axis 142 and has a connector peripheral wall 144 surrounding a connector inner volume 146 that extends longitudinally there through. The connector inner volume 146 is generally in fluid communication with the segment inner volumes 122 of the adjacent shell segments 90 such that the filling component 26 is slidably and successively insertable through the connector inner volume 146 and the adjacent segment inner volumes 122 in a direction generally along the connector longitudinal axis 142 and the shell longitudinal axis 92, which are preferably generally coaxial to one another.

As it is for the throat section 102, the connector peripheral wall 144 is configured and sized to longitudinally slidably fit into the segment inner volume 122 of the adjacent shell segments 90.

Accordingly, the connector peripheral wall 144 has a circumferential periphery generally radially smaller than the periphery of the segment peripheral wall 120 of adjacent shell segments 90 so as to longitudinally slidably fit thereinto.

Obviously, one skilled in the art would easily understand that the connector component 141 ~~component 140~~ could include a plurality of connecting bars or brackets (not shown) securing to the peripheral walls 120 of adjacent shell segments 90 without departing from the scope of the present invention. Further, it would also be obvious to one skilled in the art that the presence of a

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filling component 26 inside the shell segments 90, especially when extending through the interfaces between adjacent shell segments 90, increases the overall rigidity of the pontoon 110a. —